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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [IAEA](#) [PARM](#) [MNUC](#) [AU](#)
SUBJECT: GC VOTE ON MESA SEAT AT IAEA BOG; AUSTRIA
REF: STATE 99745

Classified By: DCM Scott Kilner. Reason: 1.4(b) and (d).

(C) Summary. Austria will engage at least some MESA-group states to encourage a consensus in favor of Afghanistan's IAEA BoG candidacy, according to MFA Acting PolDir and Middle East Chief Ralph Scheide. End Summary.

¶2. (C) On the margins of another event Sept. 19, Ambassador noted strong U.S. concerns about the Syrian and Iranian BoG candidacies to MFA State Secretary Winkler, PolDir Mayr-Harting, and Middle East Director Scheide. DCM followed up in detail in a July 22 meeting with Scheide, who was acting as PolDir in Mayr-Harting's stead while the latter was in New York for the UNGA.

¶3. (C) Scheide, initially reluctant to be drawn out on Austria's own response to the situation, said that Austria would prefer the emergence of a consensus candidate, other than the Syrians or Iranians. However, he saw no indications that a consensus was emerging in the MESA group. DCM stressed the impact either a Syrian or an Iranian candidacy would have on the IAEA's credibility, a point Scheide readily acknowledged. He also agreed that U.S. concerns about the role of either in the BoG were valid, noting only that Syria would be "a bit less bad." After further discussion, including noting that the emergence of a new candidate that might gain a consensus was remote, Scheide agreed that the best option would be for the MESA group to unite around Afghanistan.

¶4. (C) Scheide then asked what the U.S. reaction would be should Iran secure a consensus in the MESA group -- and specifically, whether the U.S. would formally object (by calling for a vote in the GC) to such a candidacy. DCM said the U.S. hoped to forestall just such an eventuality, and would appreciate Austria's help. He noted also that Afghanistan's candidacy appears firm and forestalls such a consensus for Iran or Syria. In any case, a consensus in the MESA group for either Iran or Syria would pose an enormous challenge to the IAEA's credibility. Scheide replied that "respect for procedures and the principle of universality" were also part of the credibility of the IAEA. Austria would not, he said, like to see a MESA consensus challenged.

¶5. (C) DCM repeated that a consensus for Iran or Syria appeared unlikely according to the information now available to the USG, and urged Austria to join in working for a consensus in the MESA in favor of Afghanistan. Scheide concluded the discussion noting, "I will discuss the matter with some of my Arab friends."

¶6. (C) Comment. Austrian concern about a possible challenge to a MESA consensus (by the U.S. or others) for Iran or Syria is a significant incentive for Vienna to use its contacts with Arab states to push an Afghanistan consensus. If Austria's concern for process (now heightened by the

impending vote for a non-permanent UNSC seat) is shared by many in the EU, however, heavy lifting will be required if the USG is to win European support for such a challenge, if necessary.

GIRARD-DICARLO